OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Assessment story

OCR LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE IN

SUSTAINABILITY

H082

For first teaching in 2025

Understanding the assessment: examined and moderated

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1. Introduction

Our OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability is a high quality qualification aimed at students aged 16 or above, who want to progress into work or higher education. It is designed to complement and enhance a Level 3 study programme, building applied and practical skills.

This exciting qualification will be available for first teaching from September 2025. We've created this guide to share with you the story of our assessment approach for this qualification. We've also developed a resource called Exploring our exams: a guide to our sample assessment material to give you more information about the content and structure of the external assessment for this qualification.

During the development of the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability, we talked extensively with representatives from organisations including the WWF and Higher Education (HE), teachers, subject experts and our senior assessment teams, to influence the structure and content of the qualification and assessment materials. We then shared our final materials with the representative from the organisations, and teachers to make sure that they met their needs and the progressional needs of students.

Quotes from organisational representatives:

> *"The qualification will bring the idea of the circular economy to students across England and will support the next generation to get the knowledge and skills they need to play a role in a better future for us all."*
>
> Ellen MacArthur Foundation, January 2025

> *"Looks a very interesting qualification and I can see there are links to work we do in skills and environment here at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority."*
>
> Mayor Dr Nik Johnson - CPCA, January 2025

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2. Qualification structures

There is one size of qualification in sustainability. This is:

- A Certificate qualification: This is 150 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) – approximately the same size as an AS level qualification.

Students will take 2 mandatory units in the OCR Level 3 Certificate qualification:

- One externally assessed (EA) unit. This is assessed by a written exam.
- One non examined assessment (NEA) unit. This is assessed by OCR-set assignment.

To help further enhance delivery flexibility, there are four opportunities for students to take exams, and for you to submit NEA outcomes (NEA), over a typical two-year programme of study. These are January and June each year. Assessments can be taken in any order – there is no terminal assessment requirement. Qualification certification is available at each assessment series. More information about the availability of assessments is in **sections 3 and 8**.

This table shows the structure for the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability.

Unit Number	Unit Title	EA or NEA	M/O*	GLH	UMS+	Raw marks
F227	Fundamentals of sustainability	EA	M	75	60	60
F228	Sustainability in practice	NEA	M	75	60	24

*Mandatory or Optional
+Uniform Mark Scale

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Grading

When we work out students' qualification grades, we need to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different assessments over time and between different units. We use a uniform mark scale (UMS) to do this. The uniform mark for each unit is calculated from the mark achieved on the exam (raw mark) for the EA unit, or from the number of assessment criteria achieved for the NEA unit. For ease, these are shown as raw marks on the qualification structure table.

The raw marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark. The uniform mark achieved for each unit will be aggregated to give a total uniform mark for the qualification. Students' qualification grades will be determined by the total uniform mark they achieve. All uniform marks achieved by a student for each unit will count towards their qualification grade. This means that this qualification takes a compensatory approach rather than a 'hurdles-based' approach to assessment. Students might perform well on some units to make up for shortcomings on other units and may pass the qualification without achieving a pass in each unit.

Each **unit** has the following grade outcomes:

- Distinction (D)
- Merit (M)
- Pass (P)
- Unclassified (U)

The overall qualification grades for the OCR Level 3 in Sustainability is:

- Distinction* (D*)
- Distinction (D)
- Merit (M)
- Pass (P)
- Unclassified (U)

You can find more information about grading and awarding grades in **Section 6** of the **specification**.

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Performance Objectives (POs)

The OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability qualification has related Performance Objectives (POs). There are four Performance Objectives.

The performance objectives are:

PO1: Show knowledge and understanding

This allows students to demonstrate core knowledge and understanding without having to apply it. It enables the use of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) or low tariff items in the external assessments. PO1 is not assessed in the NEA assessments as these assess content in an applied or practical way.

PO2: Apply knowledge and understanding

The OCR Certificate in Sustainability is an applied qualification. This means that it is appropriate that a large proportion of the knowledge and understanding is assessed in an applied or contextualised way. PO2 is assessed in both the EA and NEA assessments.

PO3: Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and performance

PO3 is assessed in both the EA and NEA assessments. This means that students will be expected to use analysis and evaluative skills in both the exam and the assignment for this qualification.

PO4: Demonstrate and apply skills and processes relevant to the subject

PO4 recognises the assessment of applied or practical skills and processes. It also recognises the higher order levels of processing, such as interpersonal skills and psychomotor procedures that cannot easily be assessed in an exam. PO4 is only assessed in the NEA assessments.

Each PO has a weighting range assigned.

The table below shows the PO weighting ranges for the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability.

PO	EA range	NEA range	Overall weighting
PO1	12.5-20.8%	n/a	12.5-20.8%
PO2	16.7-25%	16.7%	33.4-41.7%
PO3	12.5%	16.7%	29.2%
PO4	n/a	16.7%	16.7%
Overall weighting of assessments	**50%**	**50%**	**100%**

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3. Externally assessed (EA) units

The OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability qualification has 50% external assessment. This percentage is based on the UMS marks. The EA unit contains the knowledge and understanding that supports or underpins the subject content and the rest of the qualification.

When we spoke to teachers, they told us that students are familiar with the approximate 'one mark per minute' approach to exams, allowing for some additional time to read contextual information. We have designed exams that allow a minimum of 1.25 minutes per mark. The exam for the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability is:

- 1 hour 15 minutes

The exam samples content from across the unit. The annotated SAM (Exploring our exams: a guide to our sample assessment materials) gives more detail about what to expect from the exam.

There are two exam series available for the externally assessed unit each year. These are in January and June. They will be timetabled so that all students sit the exam for a unit at the same time on the same day.

We will set and mark the exam. Each exam is marked according to a mark scheme, and the mark achieved will determine the unit grade awarded (Pass, Merit or Distinction). We set grade boundaries for the exam in each assessment series.

If a student doesn't achieve the mark needed for a Pass grade, we issue an unclassified result for that unit. The raw mark achieved in the exam will be converted to a uniform mark and will contribute to the student's overall qualification grade, even if a Pass is not achieved on that assessment. If a student wanted to resit the externally assessed unit to try and improve their grade, they can resit the examined unit twice before they complete their qualification.

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Unit content

The content for the externally assessed unit is made up of several topic areas. Each topic area has related teaching content. Questions can be asked about anything in the teaching content or breadth and depth columns.

The externally assessed unit also has a breadth and depth column.

The breadth and depth column:

- Clarifies the breadth and depth of teaching needed.
- Indicates the range of knowledge and understanding that can be assessed in the exam.
- Confirms any aspects that do not need to be taught as 'does not include' statements.

Teaching must cover **both** the **teaching content** and **breadth and depth** columns.

This is what we mean by knowledge and understanding.

Know	• Be able to identify or recognise a given item, for example on a diagram. • Use direct recall to answer a question, for example the definition of a term.
Understand	• To assess and evidence the perceived meaning of something in greater depth than straight identification or recall. • Understanding will be expressed and presented using terms such as: how; why; when; reasons for; benefits and limitations of; advantages and disadvantages of; purpose of; suitability of; recommendations for improvement; pros and cons; appropriateness of something to/in different contexts.

Students will need to **understand** the content, unless the breadth and depth column identifies it as knowledge only.

Any item(s) that should be taught as **knowledge** only will start with the word 'know' in the breadth and depth column.

All other content is expected to be taught as understanding.

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Command words

We have a common set of command words that we will use in our exam. Each command word has a definition which shows what a student is expected to do when it is used. You can share these with your students when you are teaching and preparing them for the exam.

The exact response expected to a command word will depend on the context in which we use it, so students must remember that the rest of the wording in the question is also very important. Students should read the full question carefully to be sure of what they are being asked to do. The resource Exploring our exams: a guide to our sample assessment material for the externally assessed unit shows how the command words may be used in context.

Command word	Meaning
Analyse	• Separate or break down information into parts and identify their characteristics or elements • Explain the different elements of a topic or argument and make reasoned comments • Explain the impacts of actions using a logical chain of reasoning
Annotate	• Add information, for example, to a table, diagram or graph
Calculate	• Work out the numerical value. Show your working unless otherwise stated
Choose	• Select an answer from options given
Compare	• Give an account of the similarities and differences between two or more items or situations
Complete	• Add information, for example, to a table, diagram or graph to finish it
Describe	• Give an account that includes the relevant characteristics, qualities or events
Discuss (how/ whether/etc)	• Present, analyse and evaluate relevant points (for example, for/against an argument) to make a reasoned judgement
Draw	• Produce a picture or diagram
Explain	• Give reasons for and/or causes of something • Make something clear by describing and/or giving information
Give examples	• Give relevant examples in the context of the question
Identify	• Name or provide factors or features from stimulus
Justify	• Give valid reasons for offering an opinion or reaching a conclusion
Label	• Add information, for example, to a table, diagram or graph until it is final
Outline	• Give a short account or summary
State	• Give factors or features • Give short, factual answers

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Accessibility principles

Our exam paper and associated materials are developed with our accessibility principles in mind.
The table below tells you a little more about the principles and rationale underpinning our approach for the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability.

Accessibility principle			Why?
Look and feel of the paper	**1**	**Layout (clear for all)** • We use Arial 11 font. • We put in enough space for responses and room for working calculations where needed. • If a question asks for two or more points, the answer lines will start with numbers to show where students should write each point of their answer.	So that text is easy to read. To make it easy for students to add their responses or do their workings.
	2	We left align text and tables, graphs or diagrams that are for information only.	This makes them easier to read.
	3	We centre tables, graphs and diagrams that students write on.	So that they can be seen more clearly.
	4	We use bold instead of italics for emphasis in questions.	Italics can be hard to read.
	5	We only use images, diagrams and data where they genuinely support the question. Where possible, images, diagrams and data are presented on the same page as the question or on the facing page.	Images can be distracting for some students. To avoid unnecessary page turning.
	6	We don't wrap text around images, diagrams or graphs.	So that they can be seen more clearly.
	7	If students need to do something with an image, diagram or graph, it will be centred with enough space around it to do their working.	So that students can write in their answers without difficulty.

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Accessibility principle			Why?
Assessment approach	8	Command words all come from the defined list of command words. Some subject-specific command words may also be included.	To make sure the requirements of each question are clear.
	9	We keep negative questions to a minimum.	Used well, negative questions can be a good way of testing understanding but can also easily lead to confusion.
	10	We keep contexts to a minimum. Where context is needed to answer a question, we present it in as clear a way as possible, for example by grouping sentences by theme or using bulleted or numbered lists.	To make sure: • Students don't have to spend time reading and processing superfluous information. • Contexts are easy to read and to understand.
Language	11	• We use familiar words and familiar spoken-style language. • We use short and simple sentences and avoid unnecessary words wherever possible.	To make our papers as easy as possible to read and understand for all of our students.
	12	• We avoid ambiguous words and language. • We use language and terminology consistently.	To make questions and instructions as clear as possible.

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4. EA question types

Question styles

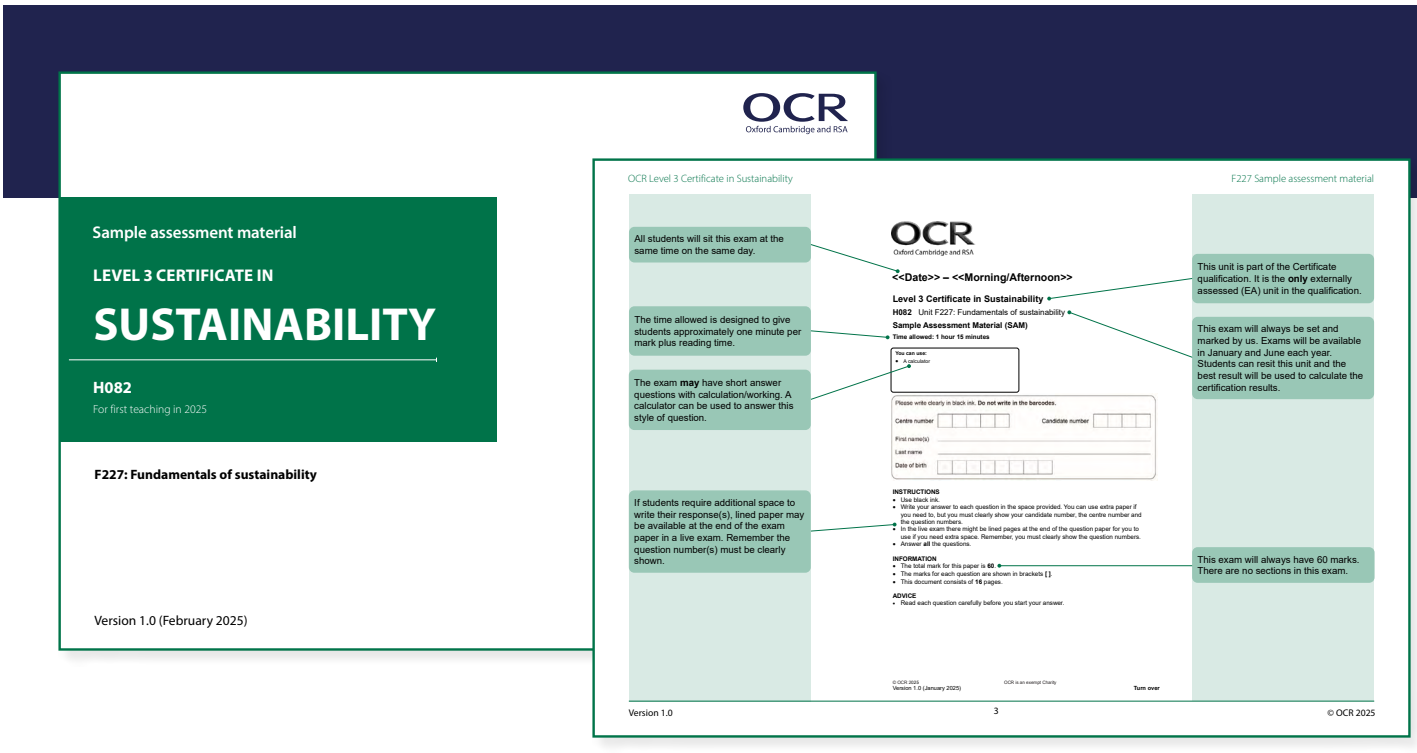
The exam is designed to test breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the EA unit's content. We use a range of question types to do this. These include:

- Forced choice/controlled response questions (including Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)) – these are typically worth 1 mark but might have a maximum of 4 marks depending on the question type
- Short answer, closed response questions – these are typically worth 1 to 2 marks but can sometimes be worth more.
- Short answer questions with calculation/working - these are typically worth 1 to 4 marks.
- Extended constructed response questions with points-based mark schemes – these are typically worth 3 to 4 marks but can sometimes be worth more.
- Extended constructed response questions with levels of response mark schemes – these will be worth 6 or 9 marks.

The range of question types allow us to assess Performance Objectives:

- PO1 – Show knowledge and understanding.
- PO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding.
- PO3 – Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and performance.

We have annotated sample assessment material (SAM) for the externally assessed unit in this qualification. This is called Exploring our exams: a guide to our sample assessment material. This gives you more information about the structure and design of the exam and the types of questions that it will include.


OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA
Sample assessment material
LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE IN
SUSTAINABILITY
H082
For first teaching in 2025
F227: Fundamentals of sustainability
Version 1.0 (February 2025)
OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability
F227 Sample assessment material
All students will sit this exam at the same time on the same day.
The time allowed is designed to give students approximately one minute per mark plus reading time.
The exam may have short answer questions with calculation/working. A calculator can be used to answer this style of question.
If students require additional space to write their response(s), lined paper may be available at the end of the exam paper in a live exam. Remember the question number(s) must be clearly shown.
<<Date>> – <<Morning/Afternoon>>
Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability
H082 Unit F227: Fundamentals of sustainability
Sample Assessment Material (SAM)
Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes
This unit is part of the Certificate qualification. It is the only externally assessed (EA) unit in the qualification.
This exam will always be set and marked by us. Exams will be available in January and June each year. Students can resit this unit and the best result will be used to calculate the certification results.
This exam will always have 60 marks. There are no sections in this exam.
Version 1.0
3
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Forced choice/controlled response questions

Forced choice/controlled response questions might ask students to select answers from a list or to complete sentences, tables or diagrams. These questions:

- ✓ can assess any topic area.
- ✓ assess PO1 most often but can assess POs 2 or 3.
- ✓ allow students to show knowledge and/or understanding in a range of response styles.
- ✓ provide an accessible method of response for students.
- ✓ enable exams to have a broad specification coverage.

Examples of forced choice/controlled response questions

Example 1

1 Finley is becoming increasingly interested in sustainability and keen to save the planet's resources, even if it means additional effort and cost for them.

(a) Finley has recently read several articles about the benefits of recycling. They have decided to try a new plastic recycling service at their local supermarket.

Which driver of behavioural change has encouraged Finley to use the new recycling service?

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Changes in the law ☐

Education ☐

Financial incentives ☐

Government policies ☐

[1]

1 (a)	
Max mark	1 (PO2)
Answer	Education (1)
Guidance	Correct answer only

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Example 2

3 Complete the sentences below, regarding the economic problem.

Use words from the list.

choice	**competition**	**need**	**opportunity costs**
profit	**scarcity**	**supply**	**want**

All individuals and businesses have needs and wants. .....occurs

when the demand for a resource or product is greater than the amount that can be supplied.

A ..... is something that is essential for human survival.

Choices are often made because of limited resources which can lead to

.....

[3]

3	
Max mark	3 (PO1)
Answer	Scarcity (1) Need (1) Opportunity costs (1)
Guidance	Correct answer only Answers must be in the correct order

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Example 3

(a) The table shows interventions that the UK government may take to encourage sustainable decisions.

Tick (✓) **one** box in each row to categorise the type of government intervention.

Intervention	**Law**	**Grant**	**Taxation**
Since June 2022, all new homes and buildings in England must have electric vehicle (EV) charging points fitted			
Fuel duty on unleaded petrol to increase by 5%			

[2]

6 (a)	
Max mark	2 (PO1)
Answer	<table><tr><td>Intervention</td><td>Law</td><td>Grant</td><td>Taxation</td></tr><tr><td>Since June 2022, all new homes and buildings in England must have electric vehicle (EV) charging points fitted</td><td>X (1)</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Fuel duty on unleaded petrol to increase by 5%</td><td></td><td></td><td>X (1)</td></tr></table>
Guidance	**One** mark for each correct answer. Correct answers only.

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Short answer questions

Short answer questions may be closed response questions, have diagrams to interpret or complete or require calculations.

Short answer questions:

- ✓ can assess any topic area.
- ✓ assess POs 1, 2 or 3.
- ✓ allow students to show knowledge and/or understanding in a range of response styles.
- ✓ allow students to show understanding of both simple and more complex ideas, without necessarily needing a detailed written response or multi-line answer.
- ✓ enable exams to have a broad specification coverage.

Examples of short answer questions

Example 1

(b) Peer pressure can encourage people to recycle more.

State **two** advantages of peer pressure as a driver for behavioural change.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

1 (b)	
Max mark	2 (PO1)
Answer	**One** mark for stating each advantage, up to a maximum of **two** marks. Any **two** from: • Peers are trustworthy as the person knows them personally (1) • Peers will be of a similar age/background, so their suggestions are more likely to fit the individual's lifestyle (1) • Peers can support each other (1) • The individual will be keen to 'fit in' with their friendship group (1) • The peer can answer any questions that the individual may have (1) **Credit any other appropriate response.**
Guidance	**One** mark for each correct advantage identified. Maximum **two** advantages.

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Example 2

(b) Identify **two** effects of climate change the developers of Finley's housing estate have responded to.

1 .....

2 .....

[2]

4 (b)	
Max mark	2 (PO2)
Answer	**One** mark for each correct effect identified from the stimulus, up to a maximum of **two** marks. Any **two** from: • Increased flood risk • Reduced biodiversity • Increasing temperatures • Increased frequency of severe weather events **Credit any other appropriate response.**
Guidance	**One** mark for each correct effect identified. Maximum **two** effects

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Extended constructed response questions with points-based mark schemes

Extended constructed response questions with points-based mark schemes:

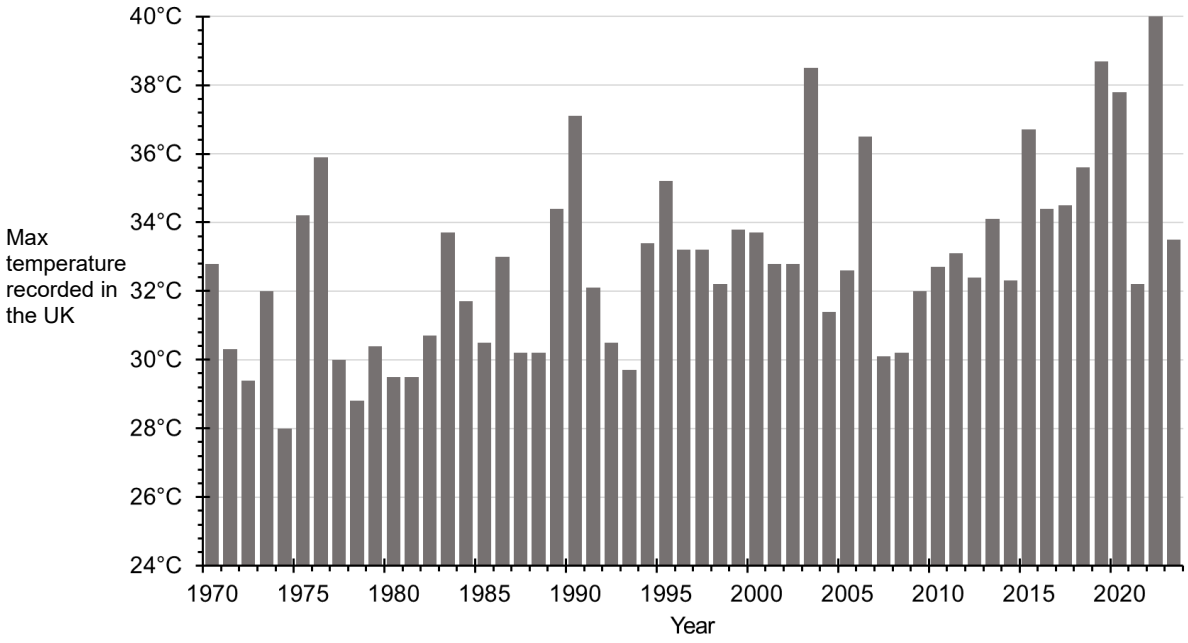
- ✓ can assess any topic area.
- ✓ assess POs 1, 2 or 3.
- ✓ allow students to demonstrate knowledge or understanding and their ability to apply it in different contexts.
- ✓ enable us to assess PO1 and PO2 in more depth than in short answer questions.
- ✓ might require students to describe, explain, outline, compare or analyse in their responses.

Examples of extended constructed response questions with points-based mark schemes

Example 1

4 Finley and their family recently moved to a new housing estate. The housing developer designed the estate to include green spaces with trees and plants to attract insects and other wildlife. The housing developer also included a flood protection scheme.

The housing developer held a climate change information event. The graph below was displayed to show the temperature of the hottest day of each year in the UK since 1970.



(a) Using the data in the graph, describe **two** trends for UK temperatures.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

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4 (a)	
Max mark	2 (PO2)
Answer	**One** mark for describing each correct trend, up to a maximum of **two** marks. Any **two** from: • UK temperatures have been getting warmer • Three of the hottest days in the last 4 years exceeded 37 °C, and only two other of the hottest days since 1970 were that hot • All the hottest days over the last 10 years exceeded 32 °C **Credit any other appropriate response.**
Guidance	**Two** valid trends from the data in the graph

Example 2

8 Two months ago, Finley saw an advert in a fashion magazine for a new coat and decided to buy one. The advert claimed that the coat was made from 100% recycled plastic.

Circular Coats – 100% recycled plastic

Our fashionable coats look great and keep you warm, but they'll also be saving plastic bottles from ending up in yet another landfill.

Circular Coats are made from 100% recycled plastic and sent to your door in our unique recycled packaging.

- Colours available: green and black
- Sizes available: small, medium and large

Look good and be **sustainable**.

'Keep warm, be more environmentally friendly and do your bit to save the planet'

www.circularcoats.co.uk

However, Finley has just read a newspaper article which states that only the coat packaging is made from 100% recycled materials. The coat is made from only 60% recycled plastic.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has stated that the advert is misleading and must be withdrawn.

(a) Explain **two** ways that greenwashing affected Finley's decision to buy the coat.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

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8 (a)	
Max mark	4 (PO2)
Answer	Up to **two** marks for each way that greenwashing influenced Finley's purchasing decision **One** mark for identifying the way **One** mark for saying how the way affected Finley's purchasing decision e.g.: • Greenwashing triggered emotions (1) by highlighting how customers will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill (1) • Social influences (1) by highlighting that the coat is fashionable/the advert appeared in a fashion magazine (1) • Cognitive bias (1) as Finley thinks the coat is made solely from recycled plastic (1) • The advert included misleading information about the amount of recycled plastic (1) which distorted Finley's decision-making (1). **Credit any other appropriate response.**
Guidance	Up to **two** marks for each valid way identified. Maximum **two** ways.

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Extended constructed response questions with levels of response mark schemes

Extended constructed response questions with levels of response mark schemes:

- ✓ can assess any topic area.
- ✓ assess PO3.
- ✓ might require students to explain in detail, compare, analyse or discuss in their responses.
- ✓ provide the opportunity for students to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning.
- ✓ need a detailed written response or multi-line answer that is presented in a logical and structured way.

Examples of extended constructed response questions with a levels of response mark scheme

Example 1

6 Since moving, Finley wanted to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and researched solar panels for their new house. However, Finley was unable to buy solar panels because the cost was too high. All of Finley's savings were spent on buying the house. They also must pay their mortgage every month, which leaves little spare money to save for investments like solar panels.

The UK government introduced a grant to help homeowners pay for solar panels, which Finley applied for. Being able to afford solar panels has given Finley the personal satisfaction of doing their bit to help the climate crisis and to act as a role model to encourage neighbours to make a similar investment. Finley's energy bill will also be reduced by £500 per year.

(b) Analyse the advantages to Finley of applying for the government grant to install solar panels.

[6]

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6 (b)	
Max mark	6 (PO3)
Levels of Response	**Level 3 (high) 5-6 marks** A **thorough** analysis, which includes: • identification of a **range** of reasons • **detailed** knowledge and understanding in the context of the question • **clear** explanation • **consistent** use of appropriate subject terminology. **Level 2 (mid) 3-4 marks** An **adequate** analysis, which includes: • identification of **some** reasons • **sound** knowledge and understanding in the context of the question • **adequate** explanation • **some** use of appropriate subject terminology. **Level 1 (low) 1-2 marks** A **basic** analysis, which includes: • identification of **at least one** reason • **limited** knowledge and understanding in the context of the question • **basic** explanation • use of appropriate subject terminology is **limited**. **0 marks** Answer is **not** worthy of credit.
Indicative content	Answers can include some of the following: Possible advantages: • Finley will be able to afford to install solar panels. The government grant provides the money to buy the solar panels which benefits Finley as they spent their savings on buying the new home. • Finley does not have to repay the money back to the government, which is an advantage as Finley has little spare money each month for monthly repayments after paying their mortgage each month. • Finley does not get into debt, which is important as they already have a mortgage. • Finley is expected to reduce their energy bill by £500 per year. This is a large saving, especially as they used all their savings to buy the new home. The savings will also increase Finley's spare money each month, which is currently limited after mortgage repayments. • The investment will have a positive impact on Finley's mental health. They will have the personal satisfaction of knowing that they have done their bit to help the climate crisis. • Finley may tell their neighbours about the grant to install the solar panels. Sharing details of the grant may encourage other neighbours to install solar panels too, which will further support sustainability in the community. Finley will have the personal satisfaction of knowing that they have helped neighbours to live more sustainably and save money on their energy bills. • Finley does not have to pay any fees or interest on the money given through a grant, which is an advantage as Finley has little spare money at the end of each month for fees or interest. **Credit other relevant conclusions, points and examples.**

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Example 2

13 Circular Coats is now designing a new rucksack that it will sell instead of coats. The company is relying on the rucksack being a success due to its fall in profits. Circular Coats has a limited budget to create the new product.

Sustainability will be the company's unique selling point (USP), therefore the new rucksack will be made from 100% recycled materials. Circular Coats can also benefit from grants from an environmental charity for businesses that make products from 100% recycled materials.

Circular Coats will offer customers a 5% discount off a new rucksack if they return any unwanted used Circular Coats products for recycling. This will make Circular Coats' rucksack different to competitors' products as none of them offer a similar discount.

Discuss whether Circular Coats should complete a life cycle assessment/analysis (LCA) when designing the new sustainable rucksack.

In your answer you must write about:

- any **advantages** for Circular Coats of completing an LCA
- any **disadvantages** for Circular Coats of completing an LCA
- whether you would recommend that Circular Coats complete an LCA **and** your reasons.

[9]

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13	
Max mark	9 (PO3)
Levels of Response	**Level 3 (high) 7-9 marks** A **thorough** discussion which shows detailed evaluation, which includes: • a **range** of points from **both** sides of the argument • a **detailed** analysis in the context of the question • a **clear** conclusion(s) with **detailed** reasons/justifications • **consistent** use of appropriate subject terminology. **Level 2 (mid) 4-6 marks** An **adequate** discussion which shows sound evaluation, which includes: • **some** points from **both** sides of the argument • **some** analysis in the context of the question • an **adequate** conclusion(s) with **relevant** reasons/justifications • **some** use of appropriate subject terminology. **Level 1 (low) 1-3 marks** A **basic** discussion which shows limited evaluation, which includes: • a **few** points from the argument • a **limited** analysis in the context of the question • a **brief** conclusion(s) with **limited** reasons/justifications • use of appropriate subject terminology is **limited**. **0 marks** Answer is **not** worthy of credit.

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Indicative content	Answers can include some of the following: Advantages for Circular Coats of completing a life cycle assessment/analysis (LCA): • Considers the environmental impact of the product from raw material extract, throughout its use and post-usage/disposal. The life cycle analysis can help identify hotspots to support specific improvements. • Can help the business to operate more efficiently and reduce waste. • Can support a circular economy. • Can help the company to develop evidence for their unique selling point as no competitor offers a 5% discount off a new rucksack if they return any unwanted used product. • Can make the product more desirable to the growing number of customers who are concerned about sustainability. The questionnaire results shows that 75% of the 250 customers consider environmental sustainability when choosing which product to buy. • Can make the company more financially sustainable as its products will better satisfy customers. This can lead to greater job security for employees. The greenwashing incident resulted in the business making a loss. • Circular Coats can benefit from grants from an environmental charity as the new rucksack will be made from 100% recycled materials. This is particularly important as the business has made a loss after the greenwashing incident. The grant can be used to financially support the development of the new product, especially as Circular Coats has a limited budget. Disadvantages for Circular Coats of completing a life cycle assessment/analysis (LCA): • Limited data may be available, especially after the main use of the product. Customers are unlikely to maintain contact with a company after buying a rucksack. • The assumptions made during the LCA may be simplistic and not aligned to the real world. • Investment decisions may be delayed whilst creating the LCA. Circular Coats may be late launching the new ruck sack on the market. The competitors may also identify the opportunity to offer a discount to customers that return any unwanted used products. Circular Coats will lose their USP if this happens. • Expensive. Conducting LCA can add to the costs of new product design. Circular Coats is no longer making a profit and has a limited budget. It will not be able to afford additional costs. **Credit other relevant conclusions, points and examples.**

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5. Non examined assessment (NEA) unit and assignments

The main purpose of the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability is for students to gain key knowledge and understanding relevant to the environmental conservation sector, as well as the ability to apply it in a range of contexts. Taking a combination of examined and non examined assessments will enable students to develop a broad and relevant set of skills and experiences which help to prepare them for progression to employment or higher education.

As our OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability is an applied qualification, it has 50% NEA. The NEA assessments assess these performance objectives:

- PO2: Apply knowledge and understanding.
- PO3: Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and skills.
- PO4: Demonstrate and apply skills and processes relevant to the subject.

The qualification has one mandatory NEA unit.

The NEA unit:

- is made up of several topic areas with associated teaching content which details what must be taught.
- has an exemplification column that provides more information about, and examples relating to, the teaching content. This helps to exemplify the teaching expected so that students are equipped to successfully complete their assignments.
- is assessed by an OCR-set assignment. This contains applied or practical tasks. Students will build a portfolio of evidence to meet the requirements of the tasks in the set assignment. The tasks are designed to meet all topic areas in the unit content.

The NEA assessment draws on some of the knowledge and understanding learned in the externally assessed unit and reinforces this learning by allowing students to apply it to scenario-based or practical tasks, which represent real-life situations. The NEA unit assesses the application of knowledge and understanding and/or practical skills.

The NEA assignment is:

- set by us.
- taken under supervised conditions (unless we specify otherwise in the assessment guidance).
- assessed by the teacher.
- moderated by us.

The NEA assignment has a number of tasks which assess the Topic Areas from the unit content. The tasks relate to a scenario given at the start of the assignment. Students should try to complete all tasks in the assignment.

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Students must understand:

- What the task is. This information is under the heading: **The task is:**
- The evidence to submit to the teacher for assessment to meet the tasks and assessment criteria. If evidence must be a specific type or format, this information is under the heading: **Your evidence must includ**e. If the assignment does not specify an evidence format, students can present it how they want to.
- The **assessment criteria** for the task. These tell students what they need to do to meet the requirements of each Pass (P), Merit (M) or Distinction (D) assessment criterion. The assessment criteria are numbered, for example, P1, M1, D1.
- The **assessment guidance**. This gives students more information about how to meet the assessment criteria. It also tells students where there are links between assessment criteria and may identify the breadth of coverage needed by linking back to content areas in the specification. There might not be assessment guidance for each assessment criterion. It is only given where more information is needed.
- The **command words** and what they mean.
- Any **advice** given. We may give students advice for some assignment tasks. When we do, it is usually a prompt to remind them to do or consider something when they produce their evidence. If there is advice for a task, it will be given below the assessment guidance.

For the assignment, we give an approximate time that it will take to complete all the tasks. This time forms part of the GLH for the unit. The time we have identified is for guidance to help teachers indicate to students approximately how long they should spend on their tasks. The **Information and instructions for teachers** section of the assignment will also tell teachers if there are aspects of the assignment that can be completed outside of teacher supervision. These aspects are not included in the GLH for the unit but count towards the qualification's Total Qualification Time (TQT). An example of this is where students need to complete independent research. **Section 7** of the **Specification** gives more information about delivering the NEA assignments.

We will publish a new set assignment each year for the NEA unit. Each NEA assignment will be valid for 2 years. The dates for which they are live will be shown on the front cover. Teachers must use a live assignment for students' assessments and submit work based on an assignment in the period in which the assignment is live.

There are two windows each year to submit NEA outcomes and request a moderation visit by an OCR Assessor. You must make unit entries for students before you can submit outcomes to request a visit. All dates are on our administration pages.

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NEA Assessment Criteria

The NEA unit has specified Pass, Merit and Distinction assessment criteria. The assessment criteria relate to tasks in the NEA assignment and tell both students and teachers what needs to be done in the tasks to meet each criterion. Students will use the assessment criteria, its associated assessment guidance and any additional information we give them in the assignment tasks to complete their assignment. Teachers will also use the assessment criteria and its associated assessment guidance to mark the students' work, making judgements about whether students have sufficiently met each criterion and its command word or not.

A **unit** grade can be awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction.

The unit grade awarded is based on the total number of criteria the student achieves for the unit. The total number of achieved criteria for the unit can come from achievement of **any** of the criteria (Pass, Merit or Distinction). This is not a 'hurdles-based' approach, so students do not have to achieve all criteria for a specific grade to achieve that grade (e.g. all Pass criteria to achieve a Pass).

The NEA unit has been developed with a certain number of achieved criteria for each grade in mind. These are known as design thresholds. The **specification** gives the design thresholds for each grade outcome for the NEA assessment in the qualification. The design thresholds for the OCR Level 3 Certificate in Sustainability are:

Unit size (GLH)	75
Number of pass criteria	12
Number of merit criteria	7
Number of distinction criteria	5
Total number of criteria needed for a unit pass	10
Total number of criteria needed for a unit merit	15
Total number of criteria needed for a unit distinction	20
Total number of criteria available for the unit	24

To make sure that our design thresholds are appropriate and that we can keep outcomes fair and comparable over time, we will review the performance of the NEA unit during the early stages of assessment and through its lifetime. The aim will be to set grade boundaries on the design thresholds initially as long as the review process shows them to be appropriate. During the qualifications' lifetime, ongoing review might lead to changes in these boundaries if any unexpected outcomes or significant changes are identified.

If a student doesn't achieve enough criteria to achieve a unit Pass, we will issue an unclassified result for that unit; **but**, the number of criteria achieved will be converted into a mark on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) and will **still contribute towards the student's overall qualification grade**.

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NEA Command Words

The assessment criteria each start with a command word. The command words will always appear in bold so that they are easy to identify and cross reference with the meanings. We have developed a common set of command words but additional subject specific words are also used. The list of NEA command words that may be used are given in **Appendix B** of the **specification** and at the end of each set assignment.

This is the common set of NEA command words and their meanings:

Command word	Meaning
Adapt	• Change to make suitable for a new use or purpose
Analyse	• Separate or break down information into parts and identify their characteristics or elements • Explain the different elements of a topic or argument and make reasoned comments • Explain the impacts of actions using a logical chain of reasoning
Assess	• Offer a reasoned judgement of the standard or quality of situations or skills. The reasoned judgement is informed by relevant facts
Calculate	• Work out the numerical value. Show your working unless otherwise stated
Classify	• Arrange in categories according to shared qualities or characteristics
Compare	• Give an account of the similarities and differences between two or more items, situations or actions
Conclude	• Judge or decide something
Describe	• Give an account that includes the relevant characteristics, qualities or events
Discuss (how/whether/etc)	• Present, analyse and evaluate relevant points (for example, for/against an argument) to make a reasoned judgement
Evaluate	• Make a reasoned qualitative judgement considering different factors and using available knowledge/experience
Examine	• To look at, inspect, or scrutinise carefully, or in detail
Explain	• Give reasons for and/or causes of something • Make something clear by describing and/or giving information
Interpret	• Translate information into recognisable form • Convey one's understanding to others, e.g. in a performance
Investigate	• Inquire into (a situation or problem)
Justify	• Give valid reasons for offering an opinion or reaching a conclusion
Research	• Do detailed study in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding
Summarise	• Express the most important facts or ideas about something in a short and clear form

We might also use other command words, but these will be:

- Commonly used words whose meaning will be made clear from the context in which they are used (e.g. create, improve, plan).
- Subject specific words drawn from the unit content.

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Examples of NEA tasks and assessment criteria

Here are some examples from our sample assessment materials:

Example 1

Tasks for students and assessment criteria

Scenario title: Improving energy efficiency

Valid for assessment from September 20XX to 20XX.
For use by students beginning the qualification in September 20XX.

Scenario

You will undertake a research project to answer the following sustainability research question:

- How do improvements in energy efficiency impact sustainability?

You must conduct your own research project where you collect and analyse your own data.

This data must be analysed to identify recommendations to improve the sustainable practices that affect or have an impact within a specific chosen industry which you will showcase at the end of your research.

Example industries may include:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Engineering
- Finance
- Hospitality, tourism, retail, and leisure
- Manufacture
- Public services
- Utilities (electricity gas, water).

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Task 1
Creating a research plan

Topic Areas 1, 2 and 5 are assessed in this task.

The task is:

Plan your sustainability research project.

Choose an industry as the focus for your sustainability research project. You could use an industry from the list in the scenario or choose an appropriate industry of your own.

- Create research project aims which explore the sustainability issue given in the sustainability research question for the chosen industry.
- Identify how your data will be collected.

Your evidence **must** include:

- A section in your sustainability research project report.

Use the assessment criteria below to tell you what you need to do in more detail.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
P1: Create research project aims appropriate for the sustainability research question within the chosen industry. (PO4)	**M1: Conduct** a literature review to explain how the sustainability research project aims are appropriate. (PO4)	**D1: Discuss** how the research methods chosen will achieve the sustainability research project aims including any ethical considerations, and how bias and errors have been minimised. (PO3)
P2: Use research to identify primary methods and secondary sources of data to be used. (PO4)		

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Assessment Guidance

This assessment guidance gives you information to meet the assessment criteria. There might not be additional assessment guidance for each criterion. It is only given where it is needed. You must read this guidance before you complete your evidence.

Assessment Criteria	Assessment guidance
P1	• Students **must** create research project aims that are relevant for the sustainability research question provided. • To be appropriate the sustainability research project aims will be manageable, practical and on a suitable scale. • The chosen industry **must** be suitable for the task, examples of industries which could be used are provided in Topic Area 1.1 however this list is not definitive, and others could be chosen.
P2	• Students **must** use research to identify the research methods that will be used for collecting data. • The methods identified **must** be suitable and practical for the research project. • Students **must** provide details of the primary research that will be used including method, sampling methods and sample sizes. • Students **must** provide details of relevant sources of secondary data that will be used. • Student **must** identify enough research methods to collect data so effective analysis can take place later in the sustainability research project and students can evaluate different aspects of their project. This will vary depending on the students' sustainability research project aims. • Students **could** plan to collect qualitative data, quantitative data or both types of data. However, students do not have toto collect both types of data in order to access all of the criteria in the assignment.
M1	• Students **must** conduct a literature review to gain insight and understand the sustainability issues for the chosen industry, relevant to the sustainability research question. • The literature review does not need to be extensive, however **must** provide an explanation of the context of sustainability issues in the chosen industry and how these have informed the research project aims.
D1	• Students **must** discuss the choices made for the research methods. These choices **must** allow students to collect information needed to achieve their aims. Students **must** also consider the practicalities of collecting primary data in their local community (examples of factors to consider are provided in Topic Area 2.1). • Students **must** discuss how they have taken into account ethical considerations and how they plan to minimise potential bias and errors when collecting data.

Advice:

- Remember to clearly reference any information used from books, websites, or other sources to support your evidence.

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Example 2

Task 3

Data analysis, conclusions, and recommendations

Topic Areas 1, 4 and 5 are assessed in this task.

The task is:

Process, present, and analyse the data collected in **Task 2** in order to draw conclusions and recommend improvements to sustainable practices.

Your evidence **must** include:

- A section in your sustainability research project report.

Use the assessment criteria below to tell you what you need to do in more detail.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
P5 Identify suitable methods to process data and present information. (PO2)	**M3: Justify** the methods used to process data and present information. (PO3)	**D3: Use** appropriate methods to process data effectively and present information accurately. (PO4)
P6: Describe how the primary and secondary data relates to the sustainability research project aims. (PO2)	**M4: Draw** concise conclusions that answer the sustainability research project aims. (PO3)	**D4: Discuss** the significance of the conclusions and recommendations within the chosen industry. (PO3)
P7: Analyse trends and patterns in the primary and secondary data. (PO3)	**M5: Explain** appropriate recommendations to improve sustainable practices within the chosen industry. (PO2)	

Assessment Guidance

This assessment guidance gives you information to meet the assessment criteria. There might not be additional assessment guidance for each criterion. It is only given where it is needed. You must read this guidance before you complete your evidence.

Assessment Criteria	Assessment guidance
P5	• Students **must** identify suitable methods for processing the data collected in **Task 2** and present information. • Students **could** evidence this criterion through a list of methods to use or by using the methods in their research project.
P6	• Students **must** describe how the data they have collected relate to the sustainability research project aims. • This **could** include whether the data collected relates partially or fully to the sustainability research project aims.

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Assessment Criteria	Assessment guidance
P7	• Students **must** use the content from Topic Area 4.2 to analyse their data.
M3	• Students **must** justify why particular methods were used to process data and display the information. • Students **must** have used methods to process data and present information for this criterion. It is not enough to just list them.
M4	• Students **must** use evidence from the data analysis in **P7** to draw conclusions. Conclusions **must** be relevant to the aims of the sustainability research project.
M5	• Students **must** explain recommendations that are relevant within the chosen industry. These **must** be informed by evidence from the primary and/or secondary data. • Recommendations require a clear description of actions that can be taken to improve sustainability.
D3	• Students **must** use appropriate methods to process the data collected in **Task 2** and present information. Students **must** be selective in the methods chosen. • Where included, students **must** process quantitative data correctly. • Where included, students **must** process qualitative data efficiently. • Students **must** present information accurately. • Students **could** use the methods in Topic Area 4.1.
D4	• The focus of significance **could** vary depending on the conclusions and recommendations. Significance could range from small scale consideration to larger scale considerations.

Advice:

- Remember to clearly reference any information used from books, websites, or other sources to support your evidence.

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6. Summary of what you need to do

Here is a summary of what you need to do as a teacher:

- ✓ make sure you are familiar with **all** the rules and guidance in **Section 7** of the **specification before** your students complete, and you assess, the set assignment. It is very important that you and your students fully adhere to these throughout assessment and marking of the NEA assignment.
- ✓ only use our assignment for summative assessment (we make other sample and practice materials available).
- ✓ only make allowed changes to the assignment – the **Information and instructions for teachers** at the start of the assignment tells you if changes are allowed.
- ✓ give all students a copy of the qualification's **Student Guidance** before they start working on the assignments.
- ✓ start the summative assessment at any point when you know you have covered the knowledge, understanding and skills with your students and they are ready for assessment.
- ✓ allow students a reasonable amount of time to complete the assignment and be fair and consistent to all students. We will indicate the time we estimate it will take students to complete each assignment on the front cover.
- ✓ students can work on the tasks under supervised conditions any time until the date you collect the work for internal assessment. If there are aspects of the tasks that do not need to be completed under supervised conditions (for example, research), this will be shown in the assessment guidance for that part of the task, and on the front cover.

Duration

About:

- 20 hours of supervised time (GLH)
  (work that must be completed under teacher supervised conditions)
- 5 hours of unsupervised time
  (work that students can complete independently without teacher supervision)

- ✓ make sure that students don't complete further work between supervised sessions on assessment tasks that must be completed under supervised conditions
- ✓ monitor students' progress to make sure work is capable of being assessed against the assessment criteria, on track for being completed in good time and is the student's own work.

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7. Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is a built-in feature of this qualification. It means that students will use an appropriate selection of their knowledge, understanding and skills developed across the qualification in an integrated way and apply them to a key task or tasks.

This also helps students to build a holistic understanding of the subject and the connections between different areas of learning, so they can go on to apply what they learn from this qualification to new and different situations and contexts.

The externally assessed unit allow students to gain knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject and the NEA unit draws on and strengthens this learning by letting students apply it in a practical way.

We give details of the synoptic links for the qualification after the NEA unit in the specification.

The synoptic links for this qualification are:

Synoptic assessment

Some of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to complete this unit will draw on the learning in Unit F227.

This table details these synoptic links.

Unit F228: Sustainability in practice		Unit F227: Fundamentals of sustainability	
Topic Area		Topic Area	
1	Sustainable practices in industry	1 2 3 4 5	Understanding sustainability Environmental sustainability Economic sustainability Social sustainability Communicating sustainable practices
2	Plan research	2 3 4	Environmental sustainability Economic sustainability Social sustainability
3	Conduct data collection	2 3 4	Environmental sustainability Economic sustainability Social sustainability
4	Analyse data and draw conclusions	1 2 3 4 5	Understanding sustainability Environmental sustainability Economic sustainability Social sustainability Communicating sustainable practices
5	Communicate research conclusions	2 3 4 5	Environmental sustainability Economic sustainability Social sustainability Communicating sustainable practices

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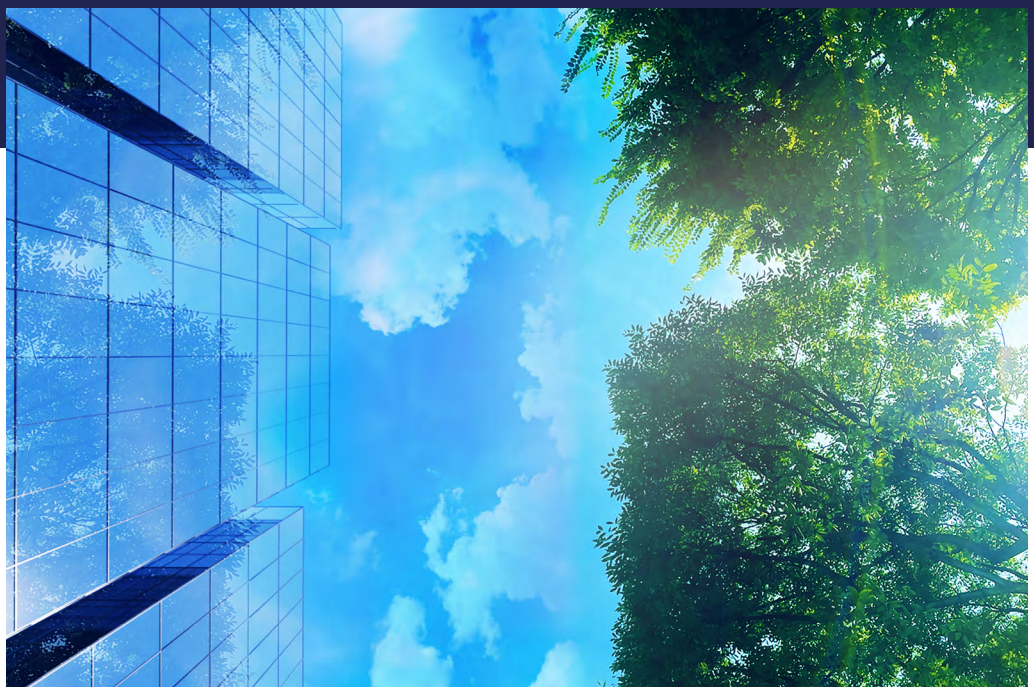
8. Transferable skills

This applied qualification also gives students the opportunity to gain broad, transferable skills and experiences that will help to prepare them for progression to employment, higher education and life situations.

Students will develop these transferable skills as a result of completing the assessments:

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Independent learning
- Presentation skills
- Problem solving
- Project and team-based working
- Referencing
- Reflection
- Research skills
- Self-directed study
- Time management



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